Miss Lucy Dura
from her friend
Isabel Tappa

A

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED

BEFORE THE MEMBERS OF THE

PORTSMOUTH

FEMALE ASYLUM,

ON

THE LORD's DAY,

AUGUST 9, 1807.

BY ABIEL ABBOT, A. M.
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TO THE

DIRECTRESSES, MANAGERS, AND SUPPORTERS

OF THE

Portsmouth Female Asylum,

THIS DISCOURSE,

Prepared, and published at their request,

WITH SINCERE ESTEEM OF THEIR BENEVOLENT ZEAL,

AND HIGH RESPECT FOR THE INSTITUTION,

IS INSCRIBED BY THEIR HUMBLE SERVANT,

The Author.

DISCOURSE.

LUKE 1, 66.

WHAT MANNER OF CHILD SHALL THIS BE!

THIS question was circulated in the hill country of Judea concerning John, the forerunner of Christ, about the time of his birth. The extraordinary circumstances, relating both to the parents and to the child, had excited an uncommon interest and expectation. The barrenness and age of Elizabeth; the vision and dumbness of Zacharias; the remarkable circumstances of the interview between the mother of John and the mother of Jesus, before their children were born; and, at the birth of his wonderful son, the restoration of speech to Zacharias, which he instantly improved to utter an inspired prophecy, an impassioned hymn of praise, all concurred to *bring fear upon all that dwelt round about them; and they, that heard them, laid them up in their hearts, saying, what manner of child shall this be!*

If strangers asked the question with so much solicitude, what must have been the thoughts and the language of the grateful parents? While the blessed

infant was in their arms, every day revived the sentiments of the birth day hymn, and renewed the tender scene of devout rejoicing and gratulation. And when they beheld him growing toward the manly state, *waxing strong in spirit*, and maturing into that high character, in which he was to be shown to Israel, their gratitude, their admiration, their joy were complete. Excepting the extraordinary circumstances of the case, would to God that all children were as hopeful as John, and all parents as blessed, as Zacharias and Elizabeth.

The interest excited in the people of the surrounding country by this wonderful child, appears natural, and gives us a pleasing idea of them, as devout observers of Providence, and as entering with an amiable sympathy, into all the feelings of that distinguished couple. That solicitude however, expressed by the question of the text, was not on account of the parents alone; perhaps not chiefly. If the full import of the song of Zacharias was understood, they regarded the child, as destined in Providence to act an illustrious part, as the *Messenger*, to prepare the way for the Messiah; and therefore to have an important influence upon the morals and religion of their country and of the world; and upon the happiness of mankind in time and in eternity.

My hearers, when we look upon our own children, or the children of our neighbors, we ought to feel a measure of the same tender solicitude. Every child we behold, if it live, will have an influence upon the morals and religion, and upon the present and eter-

nal happiness of no inconsiderable number of the human race. What influence it shall have, whether a blessed or a pernicious, under God, depends upon its education and early management. Even if the blessing and grace of God be certain to the child, the duty of human care is not precluded. Before his birth, the parents of John were assured that he *should be filled with the holy Ghost ;* yet in the same moment the angel charged them to give him the strict education of a nazarite, and to indulge him *neither wine nor strong drink.* So it is the will of God now, and cannot appear less necessary in the case of common children, that they be restrained and instructed in that manner which shall prepare them to act in the world the most useful and religious part. Those impressions, which their minds receive in the tender age, and those habits, which they form, are likely to be durable. Their hearts are soft plaster, which yields to the gentlest pressure, and assumes the form, which the plastic hand designs. *Train up a child in the way he should go, and, when he is old, he will not depart from it.* Soon the plaster will so harden, that the chisel, the severest means will scarcely be sufficient to alter its figure. *Can the Ethiopean change his skin, or the leopard his spots ? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.* Upon these elements of future society, upon these immortal beings, whom God may raise to be pillars in his heavenly temple, with what tender zeal and devout solicitude should every father and mother, every guardian and friend, every master and governess and every minister of the gospel be employed. In particular can parents be neg-

ligent, while they justly regard their offspring, as their dearest earthly treasure; the precious materials, with which their family is to be builded and perpetuated; in whose virtuous posterity they hope for a kind of earthly immortality; and, through the mercy of God in Christ, in whose society and felicity they hope to find one of the sweetest joys of the heavenly state? But parents are not to suppose that they are interested in their own children alone; nor that their own children can be virtuously educated, or at least can long be preserved virtuous, in a populous town, if any considerable proportion of their companions in age are suffered to grow up in ignorance and profligacy. Unfortunate children without parents, or with parents, who are worse, than none, may extend their baneful influence into every family. It is with bad morals and loose principles, as with infectious diseases; a few persons may diffuse the pestilence through a city; and those may catch the taint, whose health and habits seemed most secure.

These observations are made to show of what importance to the community as well as to parents, it is that none of its children be neglected. It is unquestionably a duty of high obligation that every person in society, to whom his talents, his employment, his station, or his wealth, gives influence and power, should exert them for the improvement of the rising generation.

The preacher hopes he shall not be thought wandering from the object of this meeting, while applying the striking words of the text to several classes of children, whose lot it has pleased God to cast in different circumstances. This plan of discourse may lead to

thoughts of importance to parents and children; in some measure, may develope the character of a good parent in different ranks of life; may suggest hints of some use to the amiable supporters and managers of the Asylum, and to the person, who has the care of the children; and, I humbly beseech the *Father of the fatherless* and the Friend of him, *who hath no helper*, it may prepare your hearts to open with generous benevolence to the orphans of your populous town, in whose cause, a stranger is a sincere advocate.

1. Let us first apply the question of the text to the child of *pious* and *faithful* parents; *What manner of child shall this be?*

We cannot pronounce with certainty that the child will be worthy of the parents; or that its principles and improvements will correspond to the instruction and example given. Some of the most eminent men in sacred history have been afflicted with bad children; as Aaron, Eli, David. Hence some conclude most erroneously, that religious education is of no consequence; or even that it is a vain assumption of God's work, who, independently of means, will convert those, for whom he designs salvation; and therefore rest in total neglect of their children. This is astonishing blindness to scripture and to facts; *to scripture*, which peremptorily enjoins the dedication of children to God and the training of them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and *to facts*, as good children are commonly the consequence of religious care. In many of those cases where there is a failure in a pious family, some fault of the parent may be the cause. This was the case with Eli and David. *Their sons made them-*

selves vile, and they restrained them not. It was a shrewd remark of that graceless nobleman, Lord Lyttleton the younger.* "There is a great deal of difference between a good man and a good father." He adds undutifully enough, and perhaps without justice. "I have known bad men, who excelled my father as much in parental care, as he was superior to them in real virtue." This testimony of a ruined son against his father, and that father one of the most eminent Christians and writers of England, should render parents jealous of themselves. When unsuccessful with our children, we may find the cause not always in their obstinacy, but sometimes at least in our management. This therefore we should vary from indulgence to rigor, from rigor to tenderness; and persevere, till we find the way to their hearts.

But we are speaking of the children of good parents generally; and whether we regard the promises of scripture or the conduct of the parent, we shall predict the happiest things. He rejoices over his young charge with fear and trembling. With precious hope and tender alarm, his eye is continually upon the olive plants around his table. Could you read his thoughts, they are these. "Here is my little family, *bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh;* the beginnings of men and women; spirits, just created, to live forever. They are moral beings; what shall be their character? for that determines their destiny. As yet they are in the bud. Each ripening year will gradually unfold the leaves, till the inbred and glowing colors shall all be displayed in the bloom of youth. Then *what manner of children*

* See his letters, vol. 1, Let. 9th.

shall these be? Then shall I look upon them with sacred delight and settled hope? Shall I discover in them a gentle and governed temper; and in their deportment and conversation modesty and purity? Shall I discern a heart, generously expanded beyond the circle of self, and dictating a thousand acts of compassion to the unhappy? These virtues will render them the delight of mankind; yet my fond heart could not be contented with them, except flowing from religious principle; nor except I perceived added to them, supreme love to the great Parent of all, to whom they owe infinitely more, than to the tenderest human parent. Shall I see them devoutly mindful of their Creator; delighting in his worship; hallowing his name; with mingled zeal and humility showing that their hearts are devoted to him? This, this should be in my eyes a sight more beautiful, more refreshing than the dews of the morning, to which a sacred writer compares it. If thus they honor the Father, they will also honor the Son. And shall I indeed have the joy to see them sincere believers in Christ and followers of him as dear children? Shall I see the young disciples, with sanctified hearts and devout admiration of his dying love, approaching the holy ordinance, and openly enlisting under the banner of the cross? Then would my joy be full. Such is the picture, which my busy heart would paint, as the future likeness of my children. And shall this be the manner of them? God grant it. Yet I tremble at the reverse, which (and perhaps by my fault) may be the real likeness of them. But *God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for them;* and, by my vigilance, in

some degree remedy the inconsideration of childhood; by my counsels supply their want of experience; and by my restraint and discipline form them to virtue and piety."

How amiable appears that parent, who thus meditates upon the condition of his children, anticipates their trials, and is resolved to perform the part of a faithful guardian? Those fervent prayers for them, which he daily offers to God, and that tender and patient care will not be in vain.

Though it be a painful task, it may be useful to apply the question of the text.

2. To the child of *heedless* and *vicious parents—What manner of child shall this be?*

As the child of pious parents may be bad, so the child of vicious parents may be good; but the prospects of the latter are deplorable. He has entered the world in the midst of snares; and the young traveller is misled by his natural guides, and is betrayed by his keepers. He grows up in ignorance of the most interesting things; and hears little of God or Christ, except in the way of blasphemy; and little of the eternal world, except in the way of levity and cursing.

Unhappy creature! Left to thyself, how readily mayest thou be expected to take the road to ruin! But led by the hand of *parents*, what shall arrest thy rapid progress in guilt? what shall intercept thy final perdition! The only hope for thee is that God, by other means, may pluck thee as a brand out of the fire, kindled by unnatural parents.

The virtuous Spartans were so sensible that their city must soon be what their children were taught to

be, that all, rich and poor, were taken from their parents and educated at public expense. This Lacedemonian rule, enforced upon such a family, as has now been described, would be wise and humane in the highest degree. Our laws, I believe, *permit*, and pity for the children and respect for public good, *demand* that children in these unhappy circumstances be rescued from their parental enemies, and put under the more merciful care of strangers.

From this unhappy object, let us turn away to consider—

3. The child of *rich* parents. *What manner of child shall this be!*

He is clad *in scarlet and fine linen, and fares sumptuously every day.* Too early is he aware of the advantages with which Providence has distinguished his lot; and it will be happy if his mind is not inflated with vanity and lofty with pride. There is nothing wanting to solace his appetites, or to awaken and strengthen his lusts; to bring him viciously in love with the world, and to chase from his mind all sober thoughts of God and religion, of death and judgment. When arrived to manhood, how profuse will he be in spending the treasure, which cost him no labor? or how covetous of the inherited hoard, and ardent to increase it? His envied lot is among the most perilous in the world. The Saviour, who knew what was in man, often exclaimed, *How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven!*

But if God have favoured him with *good* as well, as *rich* parents, he is blessed indeed. They teach him the vanity of all distinctions, but those of virtue and

piety; that the only noble are the children of God; that they only are rich, who are *rich in good works.* They instruct him in the nature of riches; that they are talents in trust; that as means of beneficence they are precious; but that for any other purpose, they yield not a degree of honor or satisfaction more, than may be attained in competency, or even in real poverty. To awaken in his bosom a tender sympathy, and to strengthen it by exercise, the generous father sometimes leads his son to the retreat of want and wretchedness, and indulges his little hand and heart the happy task of relieving it. The mother also, equally intent to direct and improve the native tenderness of her daughters, employs their hands, with amiable industry, like those of Dorcas, in making garments for the poor; or in leading the friendless orphan to a house of comfort and instruction. "My children," do they often say, "*Freely have ye received, freely give.* Exalt your thoughts to the Saviour of the world, and with gratitude and admiration imitate him *who was rich, yet for your sakes became poor.* Even more; exalt your thoughts to God, the merciful Parent and Friend of a dependent universe; and *be merciful, as your Father in heaven is merciful.*"

And now, is it difficult to say what manner of persons these will be, when they come forward into life? They may not astonish by the magnificence of their mansions, or the luxury of their tables; by the frequency of their entertainments, or the splendor of their equipage. To excel in these has been no part of their education. But by the blessing of God on parental example and instruction, you shall see them animated

by just and generous sentiments, and becoming the blessing and the glory of the community, in which they live. The disconsolate widow, the hapless orphan, all God's peculiar family, the poor, will find them, as ministering angels; and upon them will come the blessing of many ready to perish. Let every parent, to whom God has given wealth, and who would esteem it an honor and felicity above all others of an earthly nature to have such children, instil into them the same sentiments, and establish in them the same principles and habits, and, above all, go before them in the same amiable and religious example.

4. The child of *poor* parents. *What manner of child shall this be?*

Wise Agur saw temptations attendant on both extremes, and prudently prayed—*Give me neither poverty nor riches.* This *poor* child is early apprized of the nature of his lot; and the gaudy coat of his richer companion may awaken in his breast the same vicious and miserable feelings, which the sons of the patriarch vented upon the darling Joseph. This will almost certainly be the case, if imprudent parents are heard to insinuate their own hard thoughts of the pride of the rich, and of their illiberality to the poor. Beside these vices of mind, he is not below temptation to sensuality. *To fare sumptuously every day* will not be in his power; but vice in its grosser forms he can reach; and there is the greatest danger that the inclinations of the unrenewed heart will show themselves in low profligacy, and perhaps, as Agur thought, *in stealing, and taking the name of God in vain.* How greatly does this child need a wise friend to fortify his

mind against his peculiar temptations, and to prepare him for his lot in life?

In the midst of poverty, grant that God has been pleased to secure to him an inestimable treasure, pious and discreet parents; and how are his prospects relieved. Poor are the parents in this world's goods, but *rich in faith.* To provide for their children affluence in the world, is the least of their hope or care; their nobler ambition is, that they may be heirs of an *inheritance incorruptible.* As part of their plan, they habitually impress on their minds a train of thought calculated to render them contented with their lot, and faithful in fulfilling the duties of it. They assure them from high authority—*That a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things, which he possesseth;* that happiness is not the peculiar privilege of the wealthy; that it is the fruit of virtue and religion alone; that it is the growth of a *holy heart* in any situation of life. But while they moderate their hopes from this world, they strive to inspire them with the hopes of immortality. As in the case of princely children, every thing is done with the view of rendering them worthy of the throne, which they may be advanced to fill; so the Christian parent, in the humblest walk of life, regarding his child, through the wonderful grace of the gospel, as the heir apparent of a crown of glory, is indefatigable so to educate him, that he may not come short of it. Thus his zeal and prudence pursue the consistent plan of training his offspring according to their prospects in both worlds; and while preparing them for the highest degree of usefulness, which their talents and station in society

admit, and as great a degree of enjoyment, he hopes to be instrumental of preparing them for seats in glory. In the bosom of poverty, rich is such a child in the wisdom and example of pious and contented parents.

In the view we have now taken of families in widely different exterior circumstances, we cannot but have seen that if children have good parents, the rest is of no material importance to them. The distinctions, effected by wealth and poverty, are far less, than those effected by parental care. Those are temporary distinctions; indeed they are distinctions, which a few years may interchange, and *servants may be seen on horseback*, and *the princes*, on whom they once attended, *running beside them.*

But the moral distinctions, through the divine blessing effected by parental care, are durable, are everlasting. A child therefore has infinitely more reason to bless God for a good parent, than for a rich inheritance; and has infinitely greater reason to mourn, when such a parent is taken from his head, than when stripped of the most plentiful fortune.

Where then shall we look for the most compassionable objects in the world? You anticipate the answer; *among young orphans.* The very name suggests an assemblage of circumstances, and implies a history, distressing to a sympathetic heart. But you will bear with me a few moments, as it seems particularly proper on this occasion, while I apply the text—

5. *To the orphan;* and ask, *What manner of child shall this be?*

Orphans are left in very different circumstances; but one left with a plentiful estate is a compassionable object. How often is it seen that his patrimony becomes the spoil of its managers? There are many, the blots of human nature, and which make a man ashamed of his kind, who will prey as eagerly upon widows and orphans, as upon objects less *sacred*. Yet this is not the most general evil, nor the chief. How rare is the guardian, who does not esteem his duty done, when he has taken care of the property of his ward, and fed and clothed his body? But this little circle of duty embraces not the dearest interests of the orphan.

But I am to speak of orphans in the condition of poverty.

For a moment look into the casement of that dark cell. You behold the mother, just returned from the grave of her husband, embracing her fatherless children in all the speechless agony of grief for the dead, and of affection and despondence for the living. "My God, thou hast taken the family supporter! His labor gave them bread; he shall labor no more! His countenance in the evening gave them joy; *the eye, which saw him, shall see him no more!* He was their mouth to God in prayer, and the mouth of God to them in counsel; they shall hear him no more!" It is some relief that a tender mother is spared to the children; in her maternal endearments, they may forget that they are *fatherless*. But here is a family of orphans indeed. At the very moment, when they most need parental care, their last parent is taken away. They call; but there is none to answer. Cold are

the lips, which used to bless them; stiff are the arms, which gave them the warm and frequent embrace. Whither shall they turn to find a friend? Let them raise their eyes to heaven steeped in sorrow, and say—*My father and my mother forsake me; the Lord will take me up.*

My hearers, these pictures of domestic dessolation and wretchedness are not fiction. I adventure to say there is not a shade added above the life picture of some families in this town. And surely such objects are entitled to the most general and tender compassion.

For a moment let us consider what is likely to become of these friendless little creatures. Into whose hands shall they fall? If generous charity should not interfere, is it in the least probable that they will fall into the most suitable hands? The best families can have their choice of children; and they seek their help in the highest grade of those, who are willing to serve them, as these they commonly find the best. It is a natural remark, though by no means always a just one, that poverty and vice, want and stealing go together. The orphan family therefore have nothing but their distress to recommend them. That is not enough; most persons are found to vent their pity in an alms and a blessing, and turn from them to more hopeful children.

The orphan boy may succeed a little better than his sister. He can better bear the roughness of his condition; he can sooner provide for himself; and is exempted from some of those snares and dangers, with which she is early surrounded. But of all objects of

pity, the tender female orphan is the first. She seeks a home and employment. One looks upon her with suspicion, and decides at once that she cannot be trusted. Another, reluctant to be thought wanting in compassion, expresses a wish that he could receive her; but excuses himself, because she is ignorant, and he has no leisure to instruct. A third would generously receive her into his family and send her to school; but he fears she will corrupt his children. These unkind, but not unnatural apprehensions exclude the orphan from situations of comfort and improvement. And, through mere necessity, she falls into the hands of persons who have neither means, nor wisdom, nor heart to benefit the child; and those years, which should be devoted to instruction, are spent in servile labor, in ignorance of letters and of religion, and, perhaps, in unrestrained vice. It is easy to foresee what manner of child this *unfortunate female* will be.

But I rejoice with you, my hearers, that to the honor of your town and of human nature, the respectable females of this place have opened an asylum to this most helpless class of orphans. Shall we not say, a more generous institution human wisdom cannot devise; nor one, which shall promise, at the same expense, more *relief to the wretched*, more *benefit to the community*, or more *glory to God?*

Relief to the wretched. At an age when they are susceptible of the greatest improvement and of the greatest injury, and yet are capable of the least service to society, they are taken from the abodes of poverty, and probably of vice, to become the children of the best mothers in the community. What have they lost

in natural parents, which is not restored in the combined wisdom and care of the Directresses, Managers, and Governess? They may once have had parents, whose fondness betrayed them into vicious indulgence, or their passion into abusive correction; or whose ignorance disqualified them as teachers; or whose vices rendered their example pernicious. If such parents were their lot, God has been kind to them. They have better parents now. The affectionate managers of the Asylum, in selecting a mother for their adopted children, must have been solicitous to find one, who combines talents, affection, and principle; and one, who entertains a deep and tender sense of responsibility to her employers and her precious charge, to the community, and to her God. The good parent in the humble walk of life has been already described in this discourse; the Governess is designed to be that parent; and with the same tenderness and zeal, it is her business to instil those principles and to form those habits, which shall prepare them to be useful and happy in their humble station in this world, and blessed in the next.

Benefit to the community. There is evil prevented. A female, trained in ignorance and vice, is a dreadful seducer. In a populous town the extent of her influence is incalculable. But I turn with shame from this view to the happy contrast. A female, trained to virtue and piety, however humble the circle, in which she moves, has a persuasive influence. It is felt in the kitchen; it is more felt in the nursery; it is most felt at the head of a family.

Glory to God. With reverence let me add this article in the account of the fruits of this institution. When we speak of the glory of God as advanced by creatures or any of their services, it must be understood in a restrained sense. His glory, absolutely considered, is unchangeable, and can neither be increased, nor diminished. But relatively, it is increased, when it is displayed before men. The moral improvement and happiness of his creatures bring a revenue of praise to his name. And it seems never more acceptable to the great Jehovah, than when *perfected out of the mouth of babes.*

The amiable supporters of the Asylum will permit us to felicitate them on being associated for an object so pleasing to God and so beneficent to men. It is the cause of God, in a peculiar sense, in which you have embarked. You have entered into his family, and are employed as the mothers and nurses of his children; for *The Father of the fatherless is God in his holy habitation.* Consider that fearful language in the law, with which the great Jehovah creates a hedge about these friendless little ones. *Ye shall not afflict any fatherless child. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me; I will surely hear their cry; and my wrath shall wax hot.* By the mouth of a prophet he declares—*I will be a swift witness against those, who oppress the widow and fatherless.* While thus awfully he frowns upon their enemies, will he not smile upon you? If he hear the cry of the oppressed, will he not hear the grateful prayer of the relieved, and answer it with blessings upon their generous benefactresses.

There is animating encouragement for you from another quarter. *Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Jesus Christ ;* how consonant is your scheme of benevolence to his example and to his gospel ? It was his own tender office to *bind up the broken hearted.* He wept in sympathy ; and no wretched soul, that ever went to him, was denied his consolation. In particular, his bosom was an asylum for little children. This blessed shepherd fulfilled that affecting prophecy literally—*He shall gather the lambs in his arms.* On all occasions he kindly noticed them ; and on some he set them before his elder disciples, as patterns of a humble and teachable temper ; and bade them receive the kingdom of God as a little child, if they would enter into it. That enemies might not dare to mislead them, he gave this solemn warning—*Whosoever shall offend one of these little ones, that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea.* On another occasion, with what overflowing affection did he take them into his arms and bless them, turning with mingled tenderness and resentment to his unwilling disciples, and saying—*Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven ?* Judge then, my Christian friends, with what gracious approbation this exalted Friend of little children regards your pity and benevolent zeal for the most *helpless* of them. As, in introducing them to the asylum, you present them to him in baptism, may you not indulge the hope that his unseen arms embrace them, and that his blessing will happily succeed your care to *bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.* Thus while the

scriptures encourage you to hope that the great Jehovah and blessed Redeemer observe and approve your zeal in befriending the orphan, can you become weary in well doing? can you recede from your generous enterprize, or despond of ultimate success?

But your success is less than your wishes; your means are less than your zeal. You have visited many abodes of poverty, and have seen many little orphans whom you left with regret and tears, because you left them without relief. Would to God it were otherwise; and that your means were as abundant as your compassion. But you may be assured that the relief, which you would gladly confer, but cannot, God will regard as rendered. Sympathetic sorrow, unavailing pity, in God's account, is charity. Further; that sorrow and those tears may even bring relief; for they plead devoutly with him, *in whose hands are the hearts of men.* And see, are there not many come to your help this day? Behold this numerous assembly; does not encouragement beam from their countenances? Unaffected can they behold the lovely little family, which you present before them in decent apparel? Are they insensible of the silent eloquence of these little ones, pleading that other orphans may be as blessed as they? Are they not convinced of the public utility of the young institution, and are therefore present to cast, some their abundance, and some their mites, into your treasury? So may God grant; and this aspiration, I trust, you all silently breathe to the *Father of the fatherless.*

Suffer me now to commend the cause of the orphan to the favor and charity of this assembly. For so amiable an institution, in the hands and management of the sex, which God has peculiarly qualified for the task by

native tenderness, patience, and almost angelic zeal, shall I plead in vain? or rather need I plead at all?

By the law written upon our hearts, by the blessed gospel, by the astonishing examples of the great Jehovah and of his Son our Saviour and pattern, we are constrained to pity and relieve the wretched. If we pity not them, neither will our Father, who is heaven, pity us. If we relieve not them, when it is in the power of our hand to do it, neither will Christ relieve us. For, *with what measure we mete, it shall be measured to us again.* To this point we have premonition—*Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it not unto me.* The ancients regarded the oak, stricken by lightning, as sacred, and spared the tree on which heaven had set its mark. Such are orphans; heaven indeed has set an affecting mark upon them, not to claim our superstitious reverence, but our pity, and to dissolve our hearts in love and relief to them. Come then, the friends of the community, the friends of religion, the rich, ye also, who are in moderate circumstances, and, above all, ye kind mothers and happy daughters, help the orphans.

The friends of the community. Your pleasure is to see the world around you happy. Can you better advance the generous wish of your hearts, than by rescuing the orphan from want, temptations, and vice? Can you better secure the order and comfort of society, than by promoting moral principle in the humblest members of it, and enlarging their capacities? Patriotism will not evaporate in those kind words—*Be ye warmed, and be ye clothed.* If you limit your views to the present life, which I hope you do not, the public benefit will induce you to extend liberal aid to this

infant institution. Since to the honor of the town and of the state, this asylum has been opened in this Capital, you will not, to the disgrace of it, suffer it to languish and die.

The friends of religion. On the high ground, where you stand, with peculiar propriety and pleasure, I can present and advocate this institution; for it is a *religious* institution as well as a *civil.* What is done to promote religion is never so successful, as when applied to the young. While others give to raise these little creatures out of present wretchedness, you will give with the blessed hope that they may eventually be raised to glory. With so fair an occasion, will you not show the force of your heavenly principles and your love to Christ by Christian liberality? *Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more, than these? Feed my lambs. ——Feed my lambs.*

On this charitable occasion, our principal hope is from those, whom God has made *stewards of the manifold mercies of his Providence.* It was attempted therefore to interest the *rich* in the former part of the discourse. Here then is an opportunity to exercise those virtues, which were recommended to you as an object of parental desire and instruction. *Be* yourselves, we beseech you, that benevolent, that godlike character, which I trust you would esteem your greatest earthly felicity and honor that your children should be.

One of the most chilling circumstances to the exercise of charity is the abuse of it. The sturdy and idle beggar, the wasteful and intemperate, the needless and covetous, who by artful insinuation or bold importunity, lay their frequent contributions upon the rich, hurt the heavenly cause. Let none be censured, if

such be turned away empty from their doors. But, on this occasion, I rejoice with the rich and liberal; here is a cause, which cannot excite a suspicion. You know the amiable and respectable matrons, who, through me, solicit to be your almoners to the most needy of God's human creatures. With mingled esteem and gratitude, reach to them a generous hand. Permit us also to indulge the hope that your kindness shall not be limited to this occasion; trust the amiable partners of your fortune, indulge also your beloved daughters with an *annual* bounty liberal as their diffidence will permit them to solicit. As a mark of ministerial friendship and faithfulness, I offer a word of exhortation from the highest authority, and *Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.*

Let me not pass in silence those of this assembly, who are *in moderate circumstances of property*; for in that rank are found hearts as compassionate as any in the world. You are not to be discouraged from the tender duty, nor to be denied the refined pleasure of charity, because your means are limited. You know who he was, who esteemed the two mites, given with a *good heart*, a higher charity, than abundance bestowed without it. You have not to fear that your small sums shall disappear and in effect be lost. It is by the union of rills that the river is formed, and by the confluence

of rivers that the ocean is replenished. Enjoy thus the full delights of benevolence, and fulfil the duty by cheerfully bestowing what your circumstances permit. Let St. Paul encourage you—*If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.*

Let me appeal to the tender *mothers* in this assembly. There is an advocate for orphans in your bosoms. I appeal to your amiable solicitude, as mothers. How anxious are you for the safety of your daughters? In their tender years, scarcely can you bear them out of your sight. If ever you have lain on a bed of sickness, how did you cling to life for their sakes. Your lips are always alive with counsel and caution to them. Yet, after all, amiable as they are, they are less perfect, than your wishes, your efforts, and your prayers would make them. What then will these orphans do, without father, without mother, without teacher, without friend? By your tender affection for your daughters; by your precious hope that they shall be loved and esteemed of God and men; and also by your thousand *fears* for them, I beseech you, lend your *annual* support to the *female asylum.* That mercy, which you confer on orphan children, may the Lord repay in his blessing on your care of your own daughters, and render them as virtuous and lovely, as useful and happy in the world, and finally as blessed, as your fond hearts can desire.

To those happy daughters, who live under the eye of indulgent and faithful parents, let me say—You know the value of maternal care; let your youthful hearts glow with compassion to orphans. Will it be too great an indulgence for you to ask, that you may

enrol your names on the honored list of *annual* friends of the asylum? I wrong your parents in suggesting the suspicion. They will rejoice to see you gratefully sensible of your happier lot, and to behold in you the dawnings of that compassion, which is lovely in the eyes of God and of men.

Finally; to this whole assembly let me express the hope, that *upon this first day of the week every one of you has laid by him*, for this charitable occasion, *as God hath prospered him.* That you may be animated to the pleasant duty before you by the highest examples, raise your eyes to the great Jehovah, and imitate him, who *is very pitiful; who giveth liberally and upbraideth not; whose mercy is everlasting.* Look also to that divine Philanthropist, the merciful Jesus, whose charming maxim it was, that *It is more blessed to give than to receive;* and who knew the truth of it by wonderful experience; for—*He was rich; yet, for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.* O divine charity! May the same mind be in you, which was also in him. *Remember the Lord Jesus, that you be not faint or weary in well doing.*

Amen.

Hymns

Composed for the Female Asylum, August 1807.

HYMN I.

INVOCATION TO CHARITY.

DAUGHTER of love, sweet charity,
Thou vital, soul pervading flame!
Thy birth and nature are divine;
From God thy inspiration came.

Child of the skies, come gently down,
Thy richest, noblest powers impart:
Let thy best energies combine,
To sooth and soften every heart.

For works of mercy now conven'd,
Do thou thyself our souls inspire;
We'll join in deeds of love, when thou
Shalt warm our hearts with heav'nly fire.

Inspir'd by thine enliv'ning power,
We'll imitate our God and King;
With lib'ral heart and open hand,
We'll teach the child of want to sing.

Touch'd with compassion for the poor,
Our mite we cheerfully will give;
We'll aid the helpless child, whose wants
A father's toil cannot relieve.

Alive to sympathy and love,
We'll bring our off'rings, to beguile
The sorrows of the orphan girl,
On whom no parent's eye can smile.

Bereft of father, mother too,
And left on pity to rely,
We'll fence the plant; we'll watch its bloom;
Our God will raise it to the sky.

Then let our hearts, inflam'd with love,
Raise our most joyful peans high;
Our raptur'd tongues shall chant thy praise,
Daughter of love, sweet charity.

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HYMN II.

GREAT source of goodness and of grace,
Thou most benignant pow'r!
Thy mercy flows an endless stream;
Let men thy name adore.

Thou art the parent of the poor,
The houseless orphan's stay;
Thou lov'st to soothe the griefs of life,
And wipe each tear away.

Thine eye beholds the orphan girl,
The helpless and the poor;
While all unfriended and distress'd,
They roam from door to door.

Thy mercy, Lord, anon provides
A kind, a sweet relief;
In female charity they find
A balm for ev'ry grief.

Ye helpless females, orphan girls,
Behold your guardians near;
Give thanks to God for what they do,
Make Him your trust and fear.

And, O, ye almoners of heav'n,
Be faithful to your trust!
And when your scenes of service end,
You'll reign among the just.

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HYMN III. L. M.

PARENT of light, of life, of love,
To thee again our songs we raise;
With humble, thankful, joyful hearts,
We close these sacred hours with praise.

For blessings of thine house, we praise,
The counsels of the eve and morn;
Labours of love crown with success;
With truth and grace thy priests adorn.

We praise for aid thine hand has lent,
Through hearts of sympathy and love,
To train, thus far, this orphan band,
In virtuous, useful paths to move.

Their benefactors richly bless,
With treasures of the earth and heav'n:
In future days, O may they reap,
The fruit of what their hands have giv'n!

From acts of love in feeblest form
Let none, indignant, turn away;
In doing good, let none grow faint,
Though fruit thy sov'reign hand delay.

Now, gracious God, with thee we leave
Ourselves, our charge, and all our cares:
Accept our songs of sacred praise,
And send kind answers to our prayers.

Portsmouth Female Asylum.

Officers and Board of Managers for the fourth year.

Mrs. JOHN PENHALLOW, *First Directress.*
Mrs. EDWARD SARGENT, *Second Directress.*
Mrs. AMOS TAPPAN, *Treasurer.*
Mrs. DEBORAH SPARHAWK, *Secretary.*

Mrs. REUBEN SHAPLEY,
Mrs. BENJAMIN PENHALLOW.
Mrs. THOMAS RINDGE,
Mrs. JOHN DAVENPORT,
Mrs. AMOS TAPPAN,
Mrs. DEBORAH SPARHAWK,
Miss MARY SHERBURNE,
Miss C. LADD,
Miss ANN W. PENHALLOW,
Miss LUCY M. BUCKMINSTER,
} *Managers.*

Miss SARAH JACKMAN, *Governess.*

Subscribers Names.

mrs. Eliza Adams, widow,
mrs. Nathaniel Adams,
mrs. Eliza Adams, widow,
mrs. Daniel Austin.

mrs. William Boyd,
mrs. Isaac Briggs,
mrs. George Blunt,
mrs. Charles Blunt,
mrs. Mark Blunt,
mrs. Samuel Boardman,
mrs. Thomas Brown,
mrs. Elihu Brown,
miss L. M. Buckminster,
miss Eliza Buckminster.

mrs. Anna Cutts, widow,
mrs. Doct. Cutter,
mrs. Mary Chase, widow,
mrs. Edward Cutts,
mrs. Samuel Chauncy,
mrs. Enoch Clarke,
mrs. Jacob Cutter,
mrs. Peter Coffin,
mrs. William Cooper,
miss P. Cutts.

mrs. Nathaniel Dean,

mrs. John Davenport,
mrs. Aaron Deal,
mrs. Lucy Dearborn,
mrs. Nathaniel Folsom,
mrs. William Gardner,
mrs. John Goddard,
mrs. C. Goddard, widow,
mrs. John Greenleaf, widow,
mrs. William Garland.

mrs. Samuel Hill,
mrs. Elisha Hill, widow,
mrs. Joseph Haven,
mrs. John Haven,
mrs. Abel Harris,
mrs. Robert Harris,
mrs. John B. Hill,
mrs. Andrew Halliburton,
miss Sarah Hart,
miss Maria T. Haven.

miss Sarah Jackman.

mrs. John Langdon,
(Lady of the Governor.)
mrs. Abigail Ladd, widow,
mrs. Jeremiah Libbey,
mrs. Henry Langdon,
mrs. Edward J. Long,
mrs. Isaac Lyman,
mrs. Thomas Lunt,
mrs. Joseph Low,
miss Charlotte Ladd,
miss Sophia Ladd.

mrs Ann Martin, widow,
mrs. Jeremiah Mason,
mrs. Matthew Marsh,
mrs. Mary Meloon, widow,
mrs. Henry Mc Clintock,

mrs. John Melcher,
mrs. Joseph Mann,
mrs. S. Mudge,
miss H. Mann.

mrs. Mary Noble, widow,
mrs. William B. Norton.

mrs. Daniel Odiorne.

mrs. John Penhallow,
mrs. Hunking Penhallow,
mrs. Benjamin Penhallow,
mrs. Charles Peirce,
mrs. John Parrot,
mrs. Edward Parry,
mrs. Margaret Purcell,
miss E. W. Pitts,
miss Susan Pickering,
miss Phebe Pearne.

mrs. Edmund Quincy.

mrs. Daniel Rogers,
mrs. George Richards,
mrs. Thomas Rindge,
mrs. James Rundlett.

mrs. Edward Sargent,
mrs. Jacob Sheafe,
mrs. Thomas Sheafe,
mrs. James Sheafe,
mrs. Reuben Shapley,
mrs. Clement Storer,
mrs. Deborah Sparhawk,
mrs. Thomas Stevens,
mrs. William Simes,
miss Mary Sherburne,
mrs. Abraham Shaw,
mrs. Daniel Smith,

mrs. Daniel Smith,
mrs. Simeon Stiles.

mrs. Ebenezer Thompson,
mrs. Ann Treadwell, widow,
mrs. Amos Tappan,
mrs. C. Tappan,
miss Eliza Tappan.

mrs. T. Upham.

mrs. Joseph Whipple,
mrs. Isacc Waldron,
miss Mary Wentworth,
miss A. Walsh.

mrs. B. West, Charlest. N. H.

mrs. Samuel Austin, Boston,
mrs. John Grey, Salem,
mrs. Doct. Maine, Dover,
mrs. J. Woodman, Rochester,
miss Eliza Peirce, Gloucest.
miss Han. Tappan, Newbury.

THOSE LADIES, who are disposed to honor this institution with their patronage, become MEMBERS by paying, annually, the sum of *two dollars.* Whatever additional sum any may feel inclined to bestow, will be thankfully received, and the name of the donor recorded among the BENEFACTORS. Should any member be desirous of withdrawing her aid, such desire must be manifested to the Treasurer *in writing, before the first of May:* Those, whose names are *then* on the list, will be considered as members for another year.

Donations since the last Anniversary.

	D.		C.
By MR. JONA. GODDARD, *merchant, lately deceased, to be paid at the expiration of four years*	500	:	00
From a Lady	5	:	00
From a Lady	5	:	00

Also several smaller sums from members of the institution.

The handsome uniform, in which the children appeared on the late anniversary, was presented by the little daughter of a gentleman of this town.

By a late vote of the Managers, all bequests or donations exceeding ten dollars are, unless a different appropriation should be more agreeable to the donors, to constitute a fund for the support of this institution.